

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE UNION BUILDING? FEASIBILITY STUDY SURVEY RESULTS MEETING

February 8, 2024 – NMCOG and Spencer Preservation Group



UNION BUILDING REHABILITATION COMMITTEE

WHO WE ARE

Leah D. Basbanes - *Chair*

Sherry Kersey

Walter Alterisio

Suchitra Mumford

Alan Chaney

Jeff Rosen

Tim DiNicola

Bebe Wood

SPENCER PRESERVATION GROUP WHO WE ARE



LYNNE SPENCER
Principal of Preservation

Lynne has a long and distinguished tenure in the field of historic preservation. She began her career at *Historic New England*, where she held a series of positions including Director of Properties, a role with responsibility for 120 buildings and 50 historic sites. Lynne worked as project manager for L.V. Mawn Construction, was a consultant for the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and served as state director of the Smithsonian Institute's "Save Outdoor Sculpture" initiative. She has directed the preservation and rehabilitation of numerous buildings of national significance.



DOUGLAS L. MANLEY, AIA, LEED AP
Principal of Architecture

Doug is a seasoned preservation architect focusing on repair, restoration, renovation and additions to historic buildings. His projects typically involve buildings listed on the *State and National Registers of Historic Places* for public sector and institutional clients. Doug has particular experience with civic structures and has worked at numerous town halls, sensitively introducing 21st-century office and assembly environments into 19th- and early 20th-century structures.

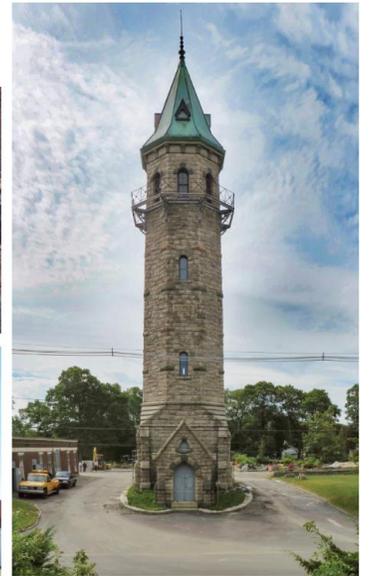


SHAWN A. WILLETT, AIA, CSI
Principal

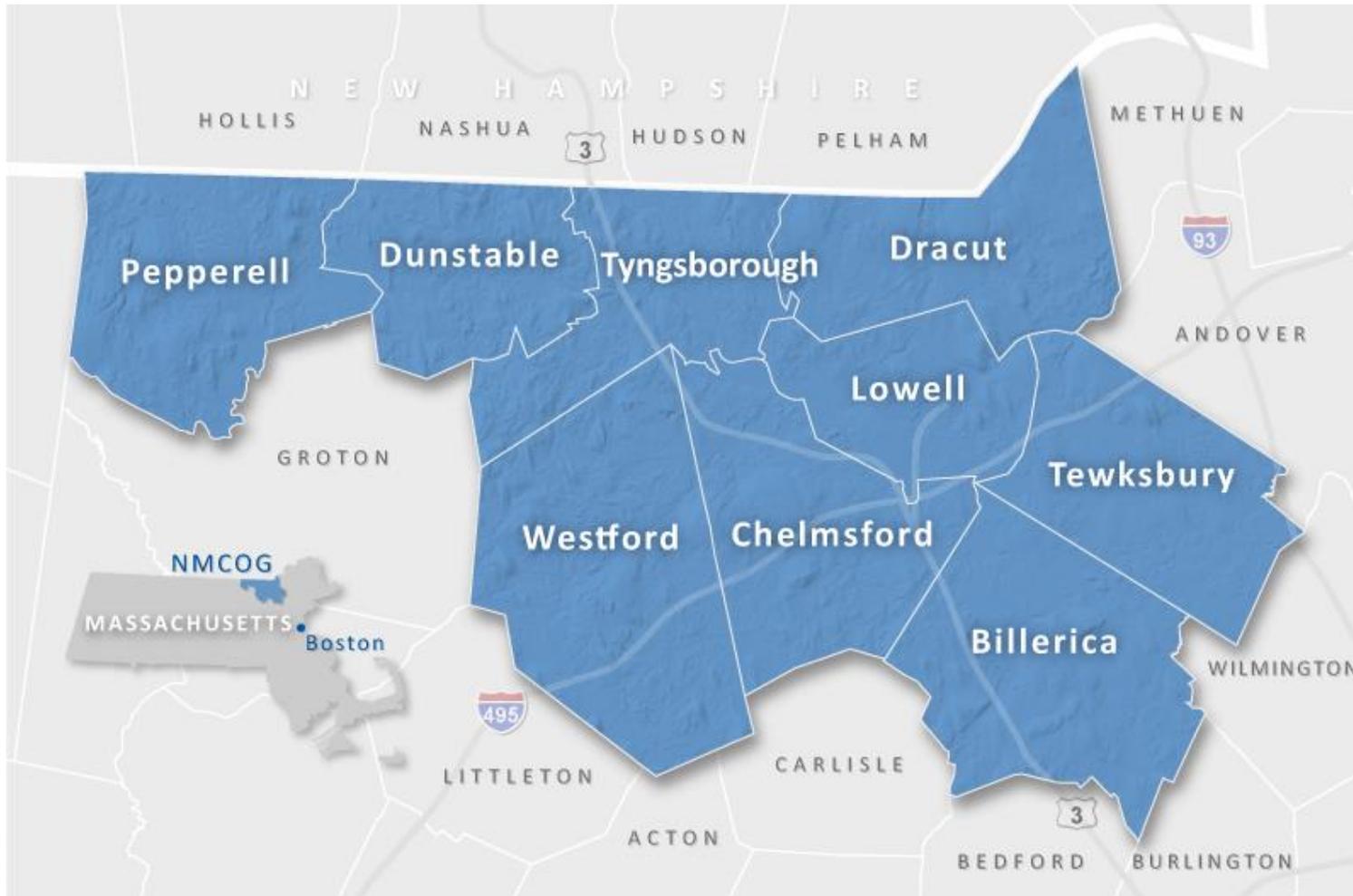
Shawn has spent nearly a decade honing a sharp interest and appreciation for ecclesiastic and institutional design - for both private clients and historical entities alike. His professional versatility allows him to wear many hats and respond to a broad spectrum of client needs, and played a pivotal role as primary draftsman for the predecessor firm Sullivan Buckingham Architects. Additionally, he's maintained a focus on procuring high-quality construction documents, rendering efficient construction admin services, and engaging his clients with unparalleled clarity and speed.

PRESERVATION ARCHITECT

OUR FIRM



NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS WHO WE ARE



- Established in 1963
- 196 Square Miles
- 310,009 population (2020 census)
- Greater Lowell Workforce Area plus Town of Pepperell
- Lowell HUD Metro FMR Area minus Town of Groton
- Provides free planning services to member communities, including recent and ongoing Dunstable Housing Production Plan

AGENDA

6:05 pm: Welcome

6:10 pm: Why We're Here, Plan Timeline, and Survey Results

6:20 pm: The 5 Downstairs and 2 Upstairs Use Options

6:25 pm: Exploration of Parking and Interior Renovation Costs

6:30 pm: Exercise 1: Facilitated Discussion on Alternatives

6:50 pm: Exercise 2: Who do we know?

7:00 pm: Convene

WHY WE'RE HERE

- Built in 1895
- Currently occupied by the Groton-Dunstable School District.
- District intends to vacate the building and turn it over to the Town
- Committee to lead development of restoration plan and identify viable reuse options

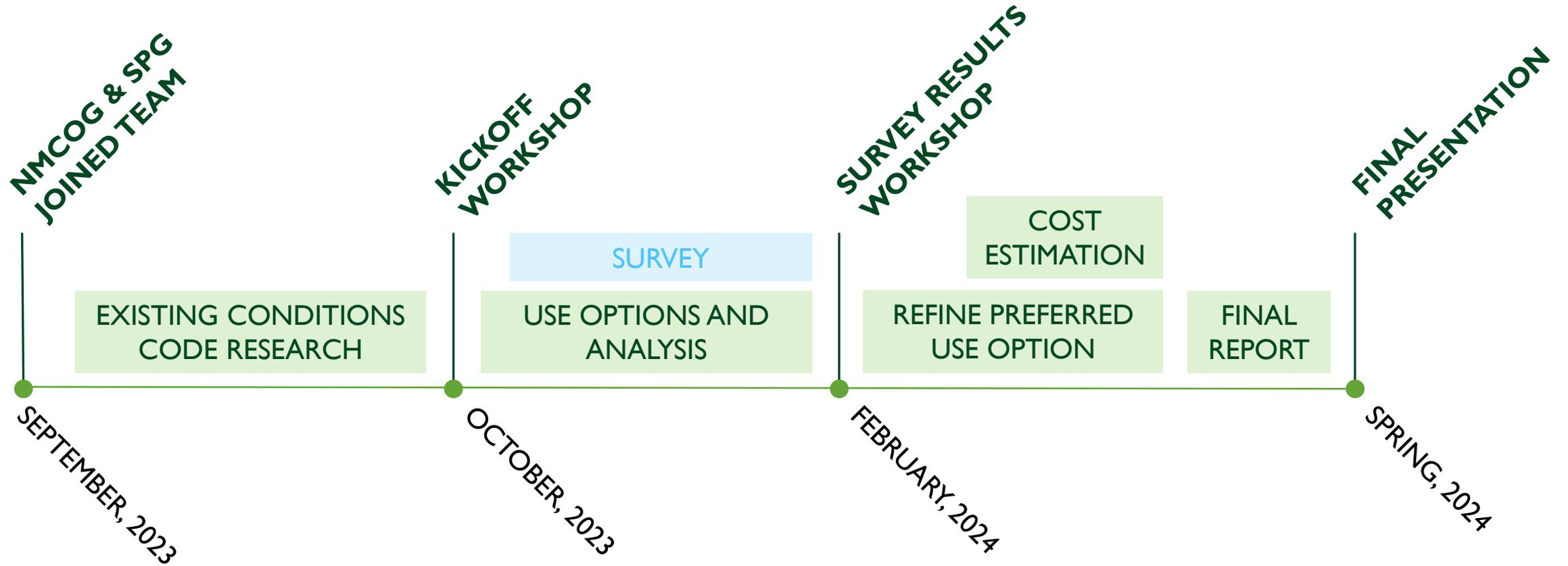


WHY WE'RE HERE

- Continue conversation and weigh possible options
- Deepen our understanding of public concerns
- Begin developing a list of interested parties to explore feasibility of various uses



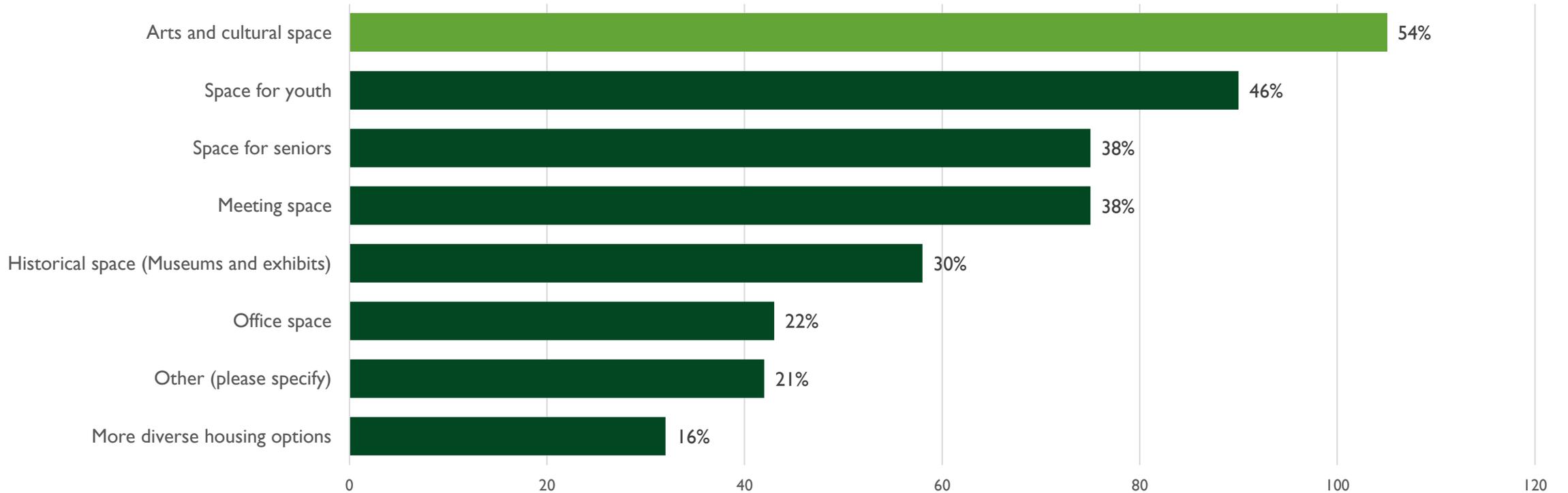
PROJECT SCHEDULE



SURVEY RESULTS



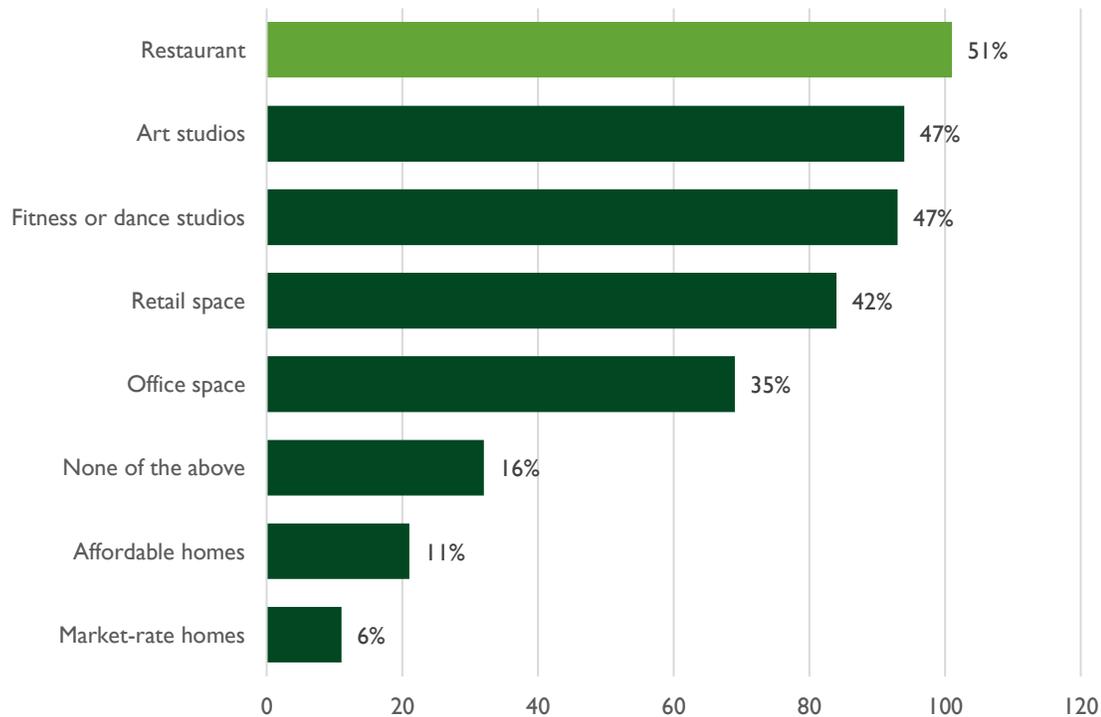
WHAT DO YOU THINK DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTER NEEDS MOST? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



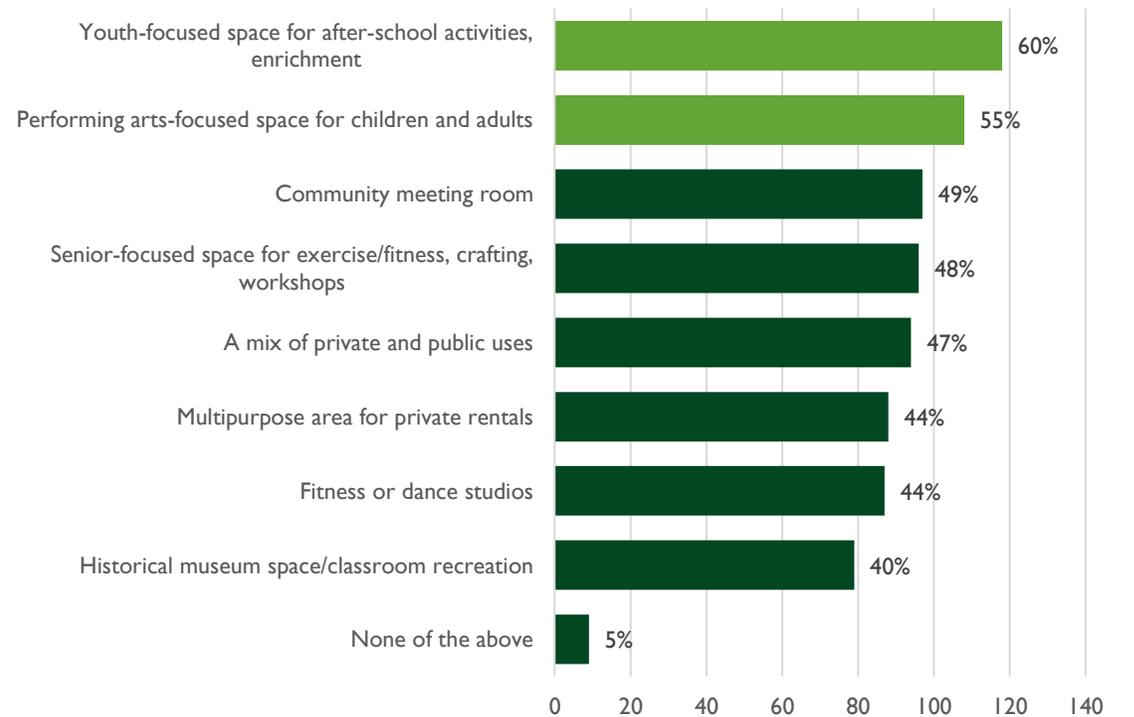
Other responses over 10: General Commercial: 18; Restaurant: 11

WHICH OF THESE NEW PRIVATE/PUBLIC USES OPERATED BY THE TOWN OR A NONPROFIT FOR THE BUILDING WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

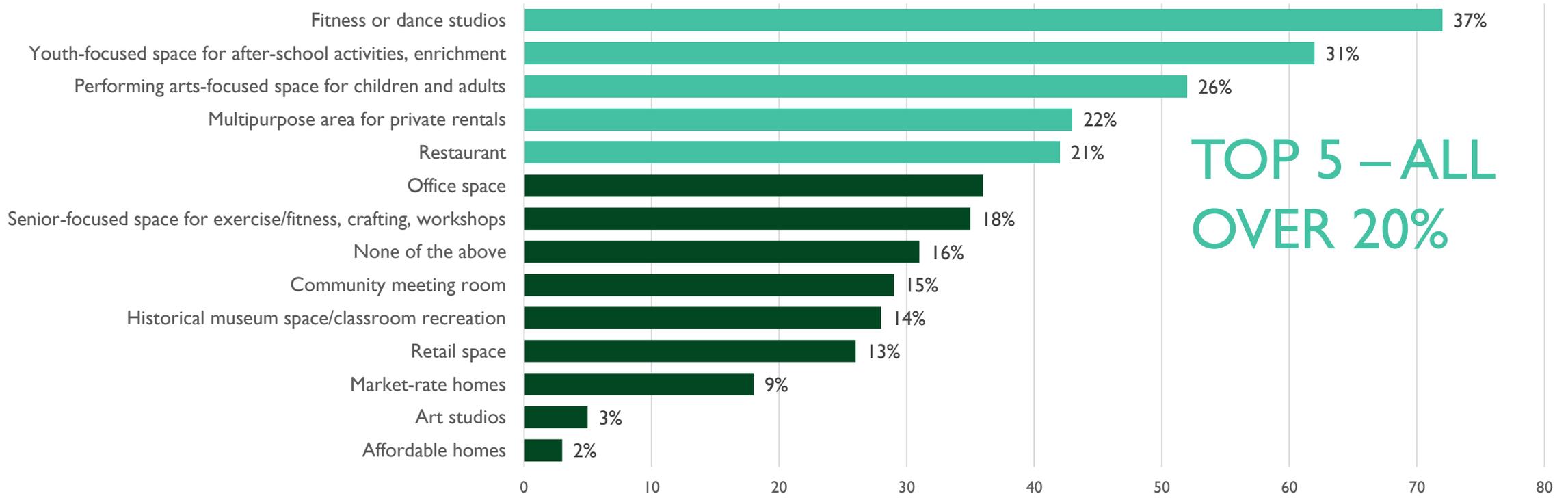
PRIVATE USES



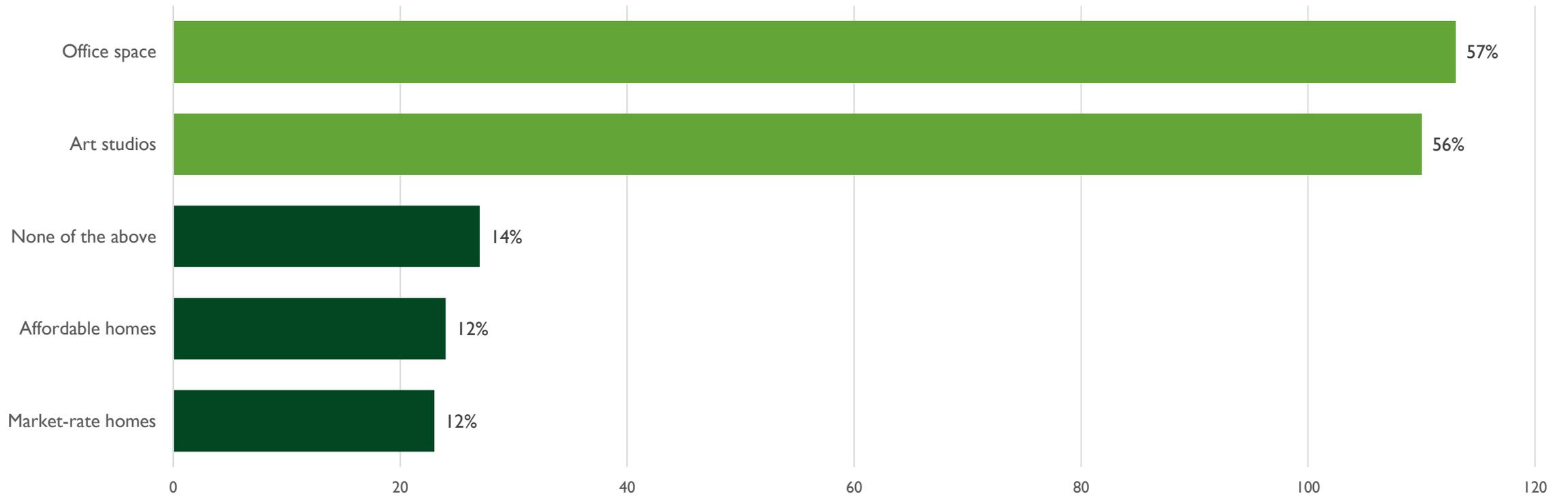
PUBLIC USES



WHICH OF THE USES WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SEE IN THE UNION BUILDING? SELECT UP TO 3.



THE UNION BUILDING REHABILITATION COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING A PUBLIC USE ON THE FIRST FLOOR AND A PRIVATE USE THAT WOULD PAY RENT TO OFFSET COSTS ON THE SECOND FLOOR. IF THE BOTTOM FLOOR WAS PUBLIC AND THE TOP FLOOR WAS USED FOR A PRIVATE SPACE, WHICH WOULD YOU SUPPORT FOR THE UPPER SPACE? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)



OTHER SURVEY RESULTS

- Which of the funding sources would you support for necessary improvements? **Majority supported these:**
 - State Historic or Cultural Grants
 - Community Preservation Act Funds
 - Private Funding (Buyer or Nonprofit)
- Would you support the town selling the building for one of the uses you support?
 - 46% said Yes
 - 38% said No
 - 16% said Maybe (Under Certain Conditions)
- Which uses would you or members of your household personally use?
 - Only restaurant received majority at 56%, but community meeting room was at 45% and many other uses were at 40%

SURVEY RESULTS, SUMMARIZED

- Which of the uses would you most like to see in the union building? **Top five, all over 20%:**
 - Fitness or Dance Studios
 - Youth-focused space for after-school activities and enrichment
 - Performing arts-focused space for children and adults
 - Multipurpose area for private rentals
 - Restaurant
- Majority support for both office space and art studio space if upstairs was used for a private use
- Majority support for CPA funding, private funding, and state grants
- Major concerns include safety and security of children, desire to preserve the exterior of the building, and limited parking

SHORTLIST OF USES



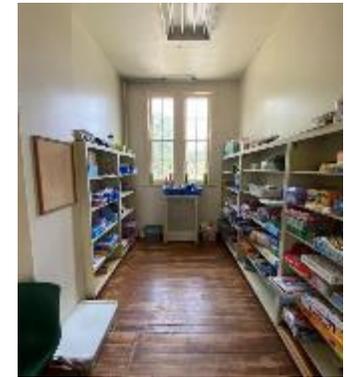
USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: FITNESS/DANCE STUDIO

- Requires flexible space
- Could be combined with other uses
- Requires interested entity to program space
- Precedent: Community Center at Old High School - Rockport, MA



USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: YOUTH-FOCUSED ENRICHMENT AND AFTER-SCHOOL SPACE

- Requires space filled with tables, desks, and supplies
- Requires interested entity to program space
- Compatible with some other uses



Source: <https://www.procaresoftware.com/blog/enrichment-programs-for-students-why-your-child-should-get-involved/>

USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: PERFORMING ARTS-FOCUSED SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

- Could be rented for community uses
- Could be combined with other uses
- Possibly duplicative of space at Town Hall
- Requires interested entity to program or manage space



Source: <https://www.fineartsbuilding.com/little-studio/>

USE OPTIONS DOWNSTAIRS: MULTIPURPOSE AREA FOR PRIVATE RENTALS

- Could be rented for community uses
- Could be combined with other uses
- Requires interested entity to manage space
- Would public demand be enough to sustain this use?



Source: https://www.peerspace.com/s/?space_use=Event&location=new-york--ny#m=redirect

USE OPTIONS FOR DOWNSTAIRS: RESTAURANT

- Size of rooms could only support café style, grab-and-go, or coffee uses
- Larger scale commercial kitchen financially infeasible for this size and location of property
- Smaller café use might not be operationally financially feasible



USE OPTIONS FOR DOWNSTAIRS: HISTORICAL/MUSEUM SPACE

- Was not as popular as part of poll
- Poll did indicate great interest in history in general
- Might make room less compatible with other highly-ranked uses
- May not generate as much income or community use as other uses
- Precedent: Sandy Pond School – Ayer, MA

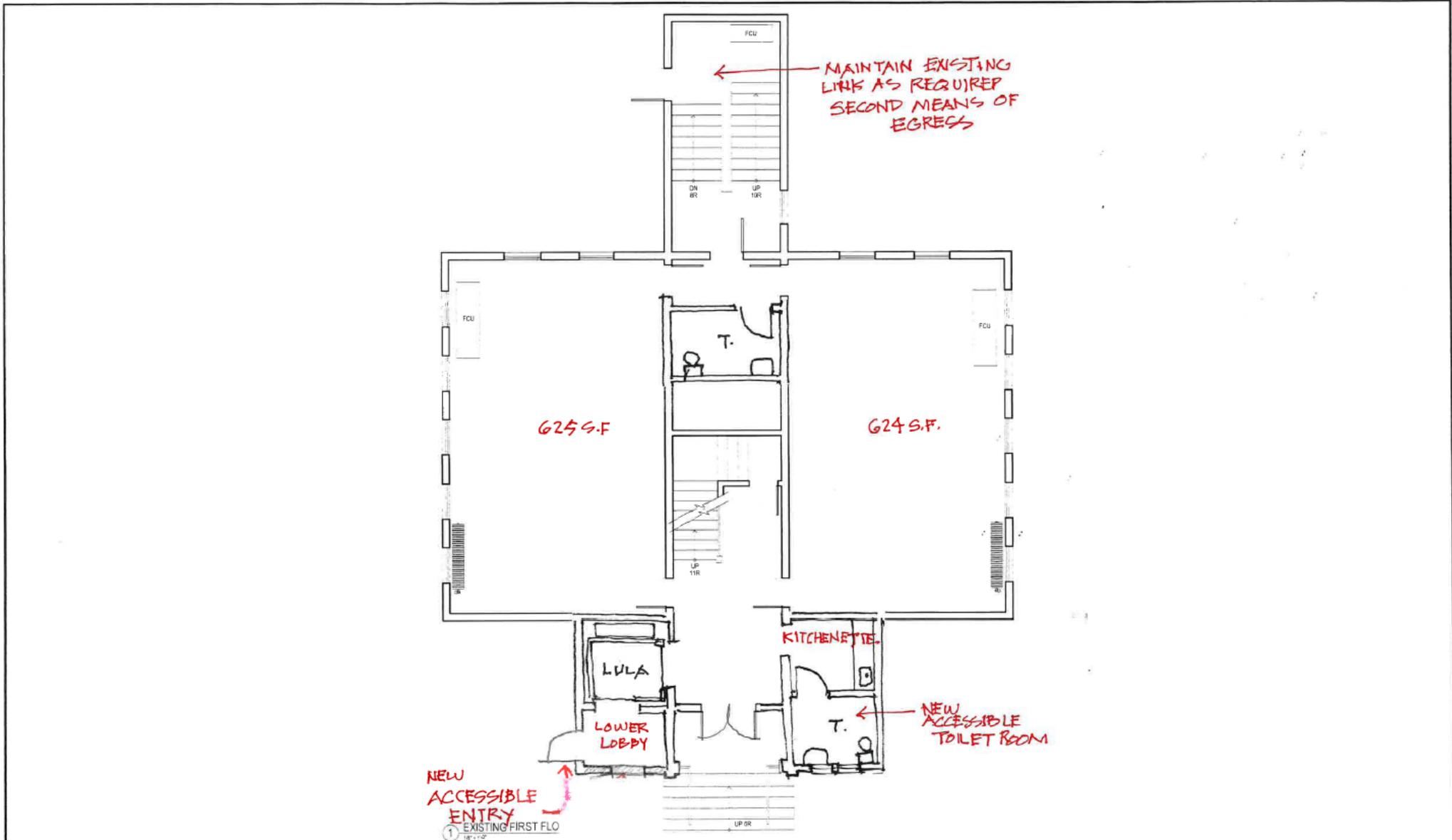


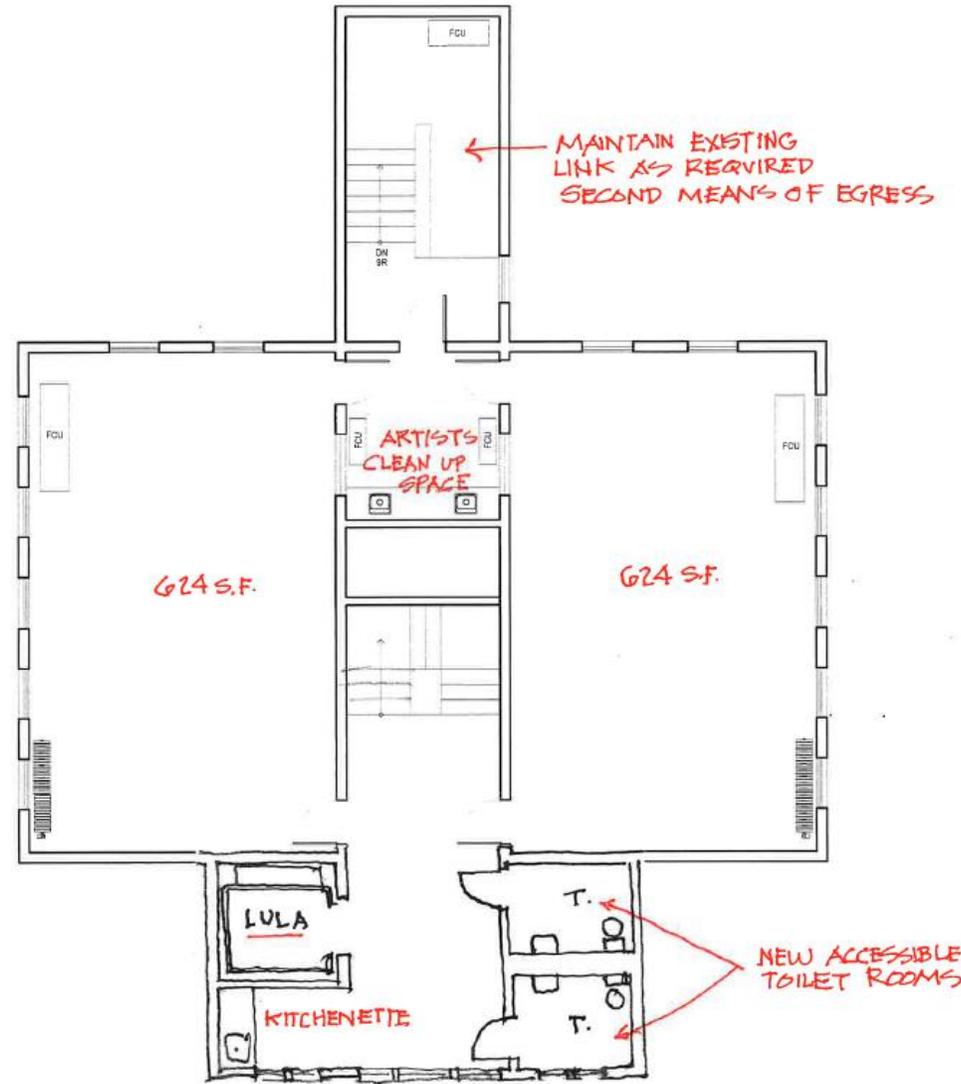
USE OPTIONS UPSTAIRS: ART STUDIOS OR OFFICE

- Poll indicated support for both options if upstairs were a private use
- Rent could offset maintenance costs of building
- Require elevator to second story
- Precedents:
 - Old Schoolhouse – Barnstable, MA (Artist Studios)
 - Valley Road School – Nahant, MA

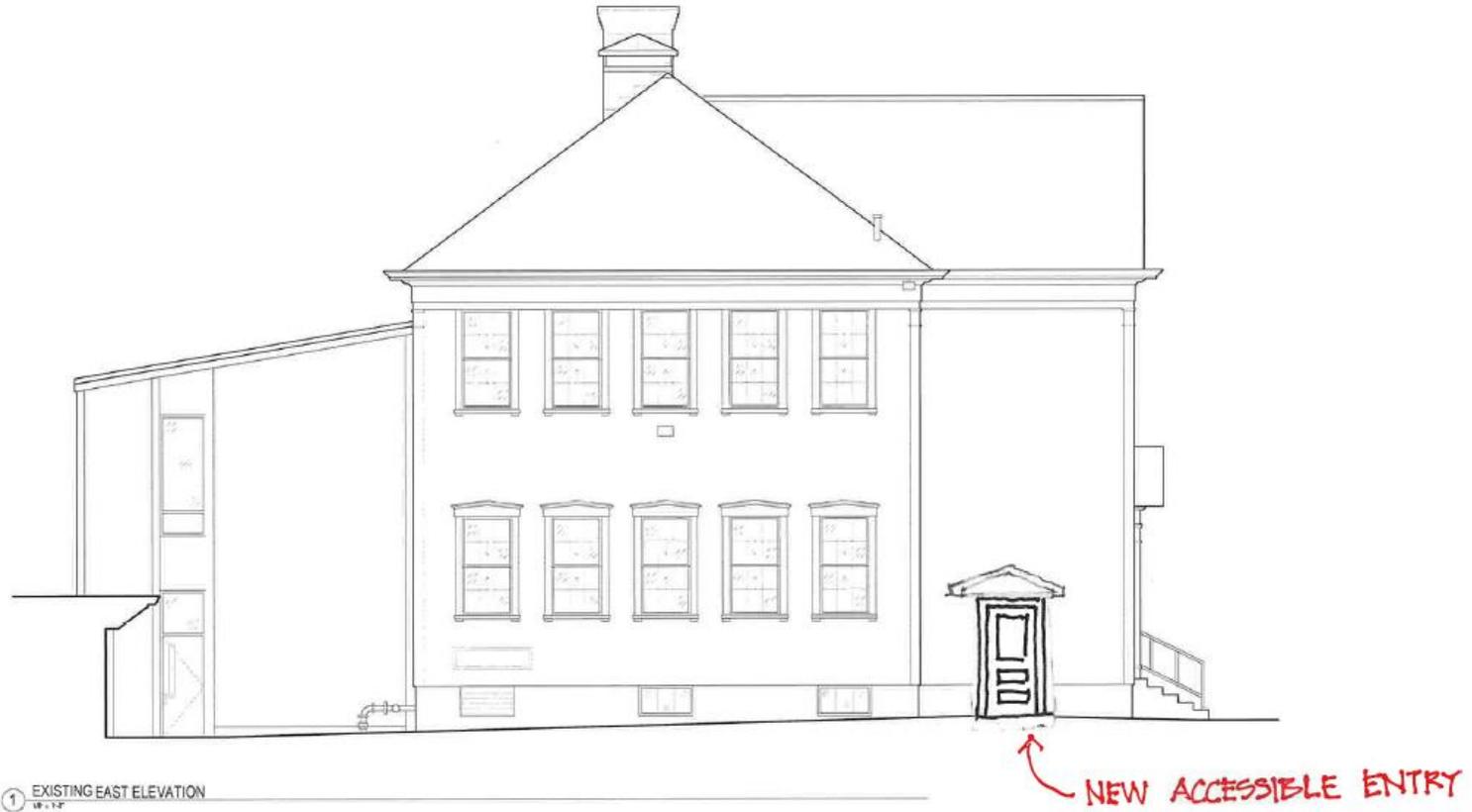


ARCHITECTURAL STUDY





1 EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



1 EXISTING EAST ELEVATION
W-11F

ARCHITECT:
 Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt
ARCHITECTURE • PRESERVATION

OWNER:

PROJECT: UNION SCHOOL BUILDING
522 MAIN ST, DUNSTABLE, MA 01927

ISSUE DATE:
Oct. 7, 2021
PROJECT #:
2109.00

SHEET TITLE:
EXISTING CONDITIONS
EAST ELEVATION

SHEET #:
EX-202

NOTES:

1. **ASSESSORS:** MAP 17, LOT 34
2. **OWNER OF RECORD:**
THE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF DUNSTABLE
516 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827
3. **DEED REFERENCE:**
MNRD DEED BOOK 985, PAGE 13
4. **PLAN REFERENCES:**
MNRD PLAN BOOK 112, PLAN 165
MNRD PLAN BOOK 204, PLAN 71
5. THE CERTIFICATION SHOWN HEREON IS INTENDED TO MEET REGISTRY OF DEEDS REQUIREMENTS AND IS NOT A CERTIFICATION TO THE TITLE OR OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY SHOWN. OWNERS OF ADJOINING PROPERTIES ARE SHOWN ACCORDING TO CURRENTLY CITY OF LOWELL ASSESSORS RECORDS.

I CERTIFY TO THE BEST OF MY PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF THAT:

THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE REGISTERS OF DEEDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

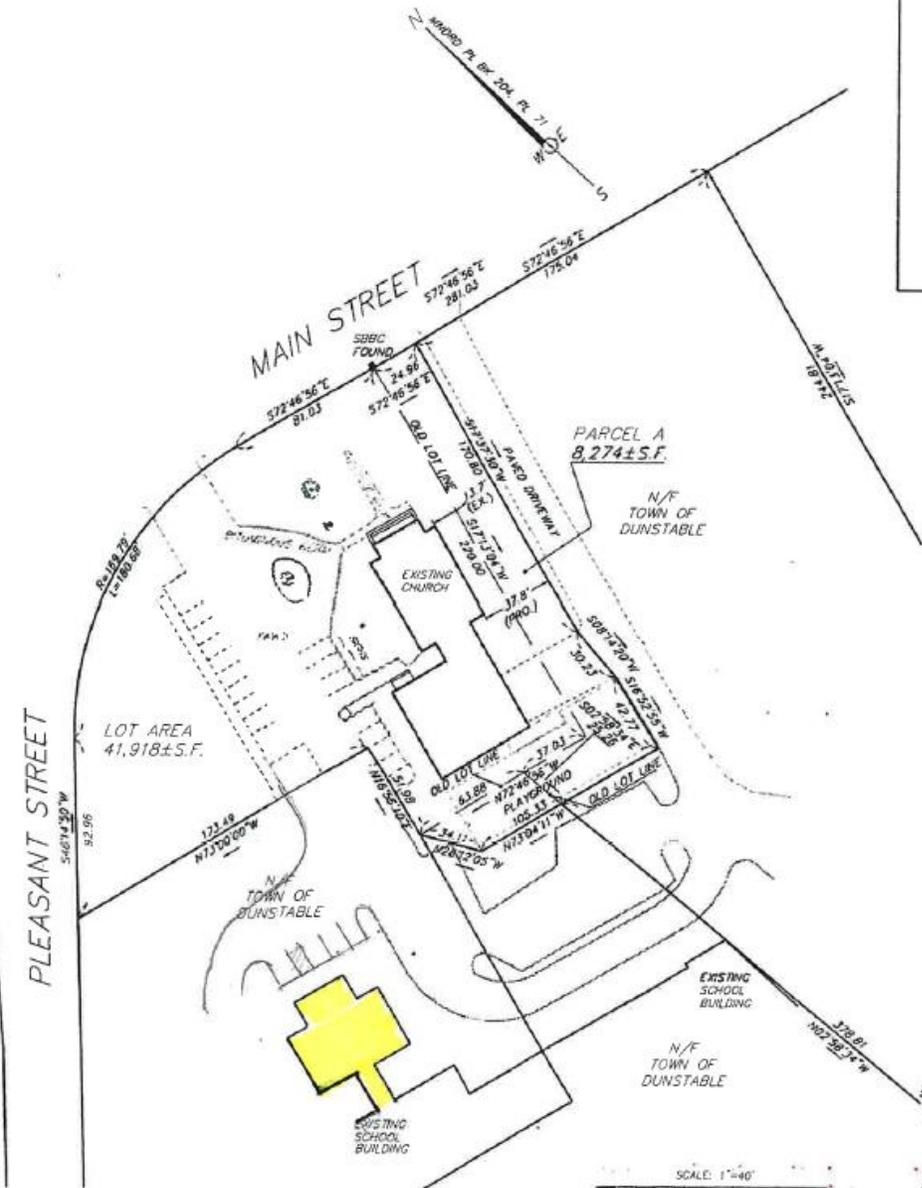
THIS SURVEY AND PLAN CONFORMS TO THE ETHICAL, PROCEDURAL AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF LAND SURVEYING IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR _____ DATE _____

LEGEND:

- MNRD MIDDLESEX NORTH DISTRICT
REGISTRY OF DEEDS
- SBBC ■ STONE BOUND BACK CENTER

RESERVED FOR REGISTRY USE

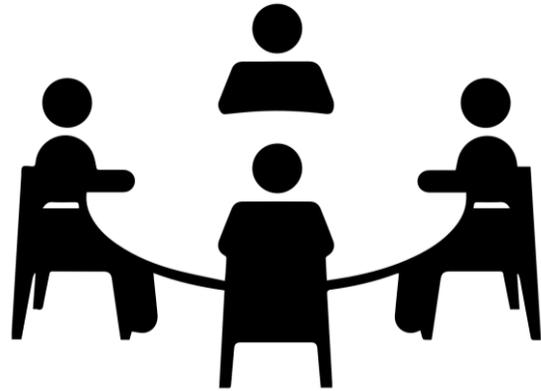


PLAN OF LAND
516 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MASSACHUSETTS
PREPARED FOR
EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH IN DUNSTABLE, MASS.
SCALE: 1"=40' AUGUST 9, 2017
NORSE DESIGN SERVICES, INC.
3 PONDVIEW PLACE
TYNGSBROUGH, MA 01879
(978) 649-1866 FAX (978) 649-2241
JOB NO. 3184

FIELD: MDR/KT	CALCS: MDR	DESIGN: MDR	CHECK: JH
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PRESERVE THE UNION SCHOOL BUILDING AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE: COST ESTIMATES

- Assume preservation & rehabilitation in 2025-26
 - Exterior preservation \$ 985,000
 - “Basic’ interior renovation \$ 400,000
 - Contingency, 15% \$ 200,000
- \$1,585,000**



What are the opportunities and challenges?

1. What do you like or what are the benefits you see from each option?
2. What concerns or challenges do you see about each option?
3. What questions do you have about each option?
4. How might you use each option?

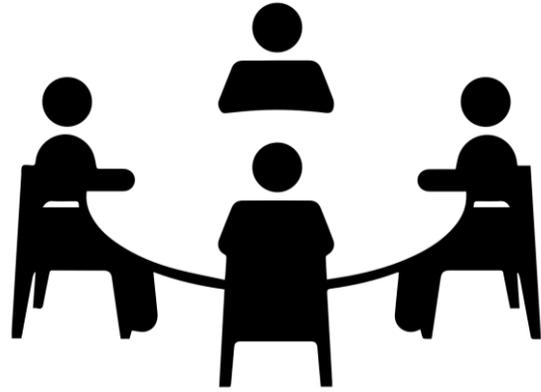
DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Respect Your Turn - Raise your hand and wait for the facilitator to give you the floor to speak.

Step up, Step Back - If you find yourself talking a lot and at length, step back and make space for others and if you find yourself not speaking much, please step up share your opinion.

Open Mind - We welcome a diversity of ideas and input.

Comment Cards - If time does not allow for your comment or question, please put additional input on the Comment Card on your table.



Who do we know?

1. Where have you seen successful operation of any of the proposed uses nearby?
2. Are there any community members who may be interested in running/facilitating any of the potential uses?
3. Do you know of community organizations that might run/facilitate the potential uses?

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

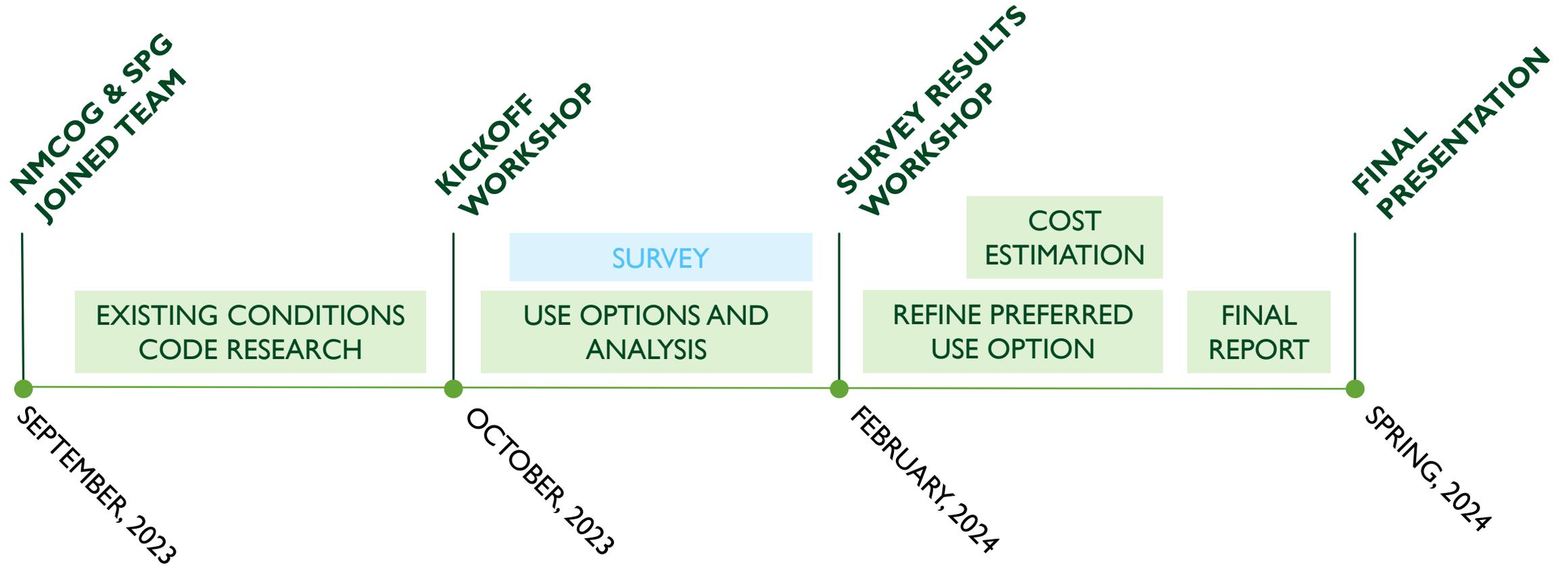
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PROJECT SCHEDULE



THANKS!

**Chris Hayes, AICP, Housing and Economic Development Manager
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments**

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